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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND ON THE WORK OF ITS SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1995 (20-23 March 1995)*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its second regular session (20-23 March 1995). The reports of the first regular session (1-3 and 6 February 1995), annual session (22-26 May 1995) and third regular session (18-22 September 1995) will be issued as parts I, III and IV, respectively. The reports will be combined and issued in final form as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 13 (E/1995/33/Rev.1-E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1.

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening of the session

1. The President said that two issues - country programmes and the management study - would dominate the Executive Board's work during the session. Other important subjects for discussion were the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and, at the annual session, follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. When taken together with the upcoming discussions of UNICEF strategies on health, basic education and water and environmental sanitation, those issues would provide the Board with a firm basis to provide guidance to the secretariat. (See E/ICEF/1995/CRP.18 for the full text of his remarks.)

2. The Acting Executive Director said that the process of management reform had clearly begun at headquarters and in the field. The structures needed to guide consultation, implementation and monitoring were being put in place and the secretariat was committed to a participatory process involving all offices and staff. However, the full process would take time to get under way and show results. The National Committees for UNICEF would be fully involved in the consultation and implementation process.

3. As to the situation in the UNICEF Kenya country office, he said that mismanagement and financial wrongdoing, including fraud, had been discovered during one of the 60 to 70 internal audits conducted by UNICEF each year. A second, more in-depth investigation was under way, involving three auditors and the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The auditors' report was expected in early April and its conclusions would be shared with the Board. Findings to date had led to the dismissal of three staff members. Fourteen others had been suspended - seven with and seven without pay - pending further investigation. None the less, programme efforts in Kenya were continuing. During the recent World Summit for Social Development, he had met with the President of Kenya, who had supported and fully appreciated the forthright handling by UNICEF of this situation. (See E/ICEF/1995/CRP.19 for the full text of his remarks.)

B. Adoption of the agenda

4. The provisional agenda, as contained in documents E/ICEF/1995/10 and Corr.1, included the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session: statements by the President and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Management review of UNICEF

Item 4: Proposals for UNICEF cooperation and programme reviews:

(a) Eastern and Southern Africa

(b) West and Central Africa

(c) East Asia and the Pacific

(d) South Asia

(e) Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

(f) Americas and the Caribbean

(g) Middle East and North Africa

(h) Regional reports

(i) Report on the reduction of outstanding balances through savings or cancellations and report on the use of general resources for projects approved for supplementary funding

Item 5: Reports on field visits by Executive Board members to Africa and Asia

Item 6: Health strategy for UNICEF

Item 7: Report of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) on its session held in Geneva on 30 and 31 January 1995

Item 8: Follow-up to ICPD held in Cairo in September 1994

Item 9: Election of Executive Board representatives from the Latin American and Caribbean group of States to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (JCE)

Item 10: Adoption of decisions

Item 11: Other matters

Item 12: Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President

5. The Secretary of the Executive Board said that the following documents were not available in languages for the session: the policy paper on the health strategy for UNICEF (E/ICEF/1995/11), the reports on programme development in the Eastern and Southern Africa region (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.3) and the Middle East and North Africa region (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.8); and a number of country programme recommendations (CPRs) (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.15, E/ICEF/1995/P/L.25, E/ICEF/1995/P/L.28, E/ICEF/1995/P/L.30 and E/ICEF/1995/P/L.31). Following discussions at the pre-session briefing held on 15 March, it had been suggested that the health strategy paper and the CPRs be postponed until the annual session, when they would be translated into language versions. The postponement of the CPRs would not affect the concerned country programmes.

6. The Executive Board agreed to postpone consideration of the health strategy paper and the CPRs mentioned above until the annual session, and the agenda was adopted, as orally amended. Subsequently, it was announced that the election to JCE of representatives of the Latin American and Caribbean group of States would be deferred to another session.

7. The Secretary of the Executive Board announced that the following observer delegations had submitted credentials for the current session in accordance with the rules of procedure (any agenda items indicated by the delegations are in parentheses): Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium (all items), Chad (item 4 (b)), Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Holy See (item 8), Hungary, Ireland (all items), Israel, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (item 5), Lithuania, Mexico (all items), Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine, Poland, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland (items 3, 4 and 6), Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Yemen. Credentials also had been received from the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF (items 3, 6 and 8) and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) International Social Service (items 3 and 8), Plan International USA (items 4, 6 and 8) and the International Federation of Social Workers.

8. One member said that the rules of procedure were clear on the participation of observers; Governments should indicate their interest in specific agenda items and the Executive Board would then decide on their participation. An observer delegation said that at the beginning of each session, the secretariat should indicate which observers had submitted credentials and the agenda items in which they had indicated an interest. Although some countries had said they wanted to speak on every item, this was not in accordance with the rules of procedure.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Management review of UNICEF

9. The Acting Executive Director introduced the report on "Strengthening management in UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1995/AB/L.4). He said that the secretariat was committed to reform and to a transparent process. A considerable consultation process was under way in the Middle East and North Africa, Asia and West Africa, with similar procedures to follow in the other regions. Many country offices were discussing the management study, and there had been divisional discussions and general meetings in New York, Geneva and Florence. He had met with the National Committees for UNICEF in Copenhagen. Ad hoc working groups were being set up and Mr. Daniel Brooks, currently Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific, would take over as head of the task force beginning 1 May.

10. He said that in considering the report before it, and especially the annex, the Board should not read into it any resistance to the management study, as the secretariat had only provided some clarifications of points made in the study. Paragraphs 17-28 of the report, containing the recommendations for action, were very important. These covered strengthening of staff morale, clarification of the UNICEF mission statement and mandate, emergency operations and procedures concerning country programmes, including the integration of their administrative and programme budgets. The report before the Board listed actions that would require its approval and the cost of the consultants to be engaged. Because of the short time available for preparing the report, those costs were based on comparative figures and were at the high end of probable estimates. Potential consultants would be identified and requested to provide proposals on an international basis, using normal procedures for requests for proposals. The responses would be reviewed, candidates interviewed and the best proposal chosen in terms of content and cost.

11. Many delegations said that the work done by the secretariat laid a good basis for reform. One delegation said that it was vital for the secretariat to provide accurate information and to respond to all questions raised by delegations. Speakers welcomed the secretariat's commitment to a participatory process and one asked that a representative of the Global Staff Association address the Board. A delegation said that the proposal did not take into account the role of the Board in certain areas, particularly the mission statement and the question of UNICEF and emergencies, where the Board's role would be critical. Another speaker said that an appropriate role must be defined for the Board in the implementation process, focusing on governing and identification of issues.

12. A number of speakers said that the Board had a role to play in clarifying both the general mission statement and the part on the UNICEF emergency response, and suggested that they be addressed at the annual session. It also was suggested that the mission statement and the emergency mission statement could be part of the country programming exercise.

13. One delegation said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child should serve as the practical and basic mandate of UNICEF without pre-empting work on a more comprehensive mission statement. Another delegation said that the Convention could be a framework to describe the long-term mission of UNICEF, but it should remain clear that UNICEF is an advocate and that implementation is the responsibility of States parties. Another speaker said that the secretariat stressed the Convention as the basis for the mission statement, but there was not universal agreement on its use as a mandate for UNICEF. One delegation said that the Convention alone was not enough for a mission statement and that the

multi-donor evaluation should be part of its frame of reference. It also was suggested that internationally agreed upon documents, including global goals and the final documents of major international conferences, should be integrated into the mission statement. The Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, stressed that while the Convention is to be implemented by States parties, the Convention itself mentions the role of UNICEF in its implementation. UNICEF also advocates compliance with the standards set by the Convention.

14. A number of speakers stressed the importance of UNICEF emergency operations and coordination with other United Nations agencies in this area. One delegation said that it would be important to discuss these issues at an early stage and with other partners, especially the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). A delegation asked if the results of the evaluation of the Rwanda emergency being conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would be shared through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Another speaker said that a delineation of resources used for emergency, relief and development must be included as part of the mission statement. A speaker said that UNICEF must ask if it had the most appropriate mix of expertise and if there were sectors that might be given a lower priority. The Acting Executive Director said that consultations already were under way with DHA, UNHCR and the World Food Programme.

15. One delegation expressed concern that the secretariat might have ignored several problems that were damaging staff morale, in particular, the important issue of the treatment accorded those who were not regular core staff members, including consultants, and their relation to the core regular staff.

16. A number of speakers said that the proposed budget for implementation seemed high and stressed that the funds should come from savings and rationalization in the current administrative and programme support budget. Other speakers raised questions about the proposed costs for consultancies and indicated that more exact terms of reference would be needed in order to clarify their mandate and reduce costs. Concerning the task force, a speaker asked why the budget was for three international Professional staff for 18 months at a cost of $743,000. Was it the normal UNICEF practice to charge itself for staff overhead, or would those funds be used to fill vacated posts? The speaker asked for a breakdown of Mr. Jay Berry's time and also wanted to know exactly what budget cuts would pay for the implementation costs.

17. One delegation asked why the secretariat was proposing spending $6 million to implement the management study when only $1.5 million had been allocated for programme support activities in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States. This raised questions about the secretariat's priorities.

18. The Deputy Executive Director, Operations, stated that following recent meetings with some UNICEF representatives before the session, revised terms of reference would be circulated for the consultancies for information resources management, finance and supply operations. While the estimated costs were at the high end, they represented a ceiling, and the secretariat would do its utmost to lower them. All proposed costs would be covered through savings accrued from measures imposed by the secretariat on spending; some $10 million had been saved in this manner and kept in a reserve, and a part of these savings would be used for this purpose. For 1996, existing budgetary resources would be used. She added that this was a unique opportunity for UNICEF to be even more efficient, and that there had to be an investment in that process. The funds to be reallocated accounted for less than 1.5 per cent of the total administrative budget and .3 per cent of all resources used on an annual basis. No additional resources would be requested for 1995 or 1996.

19. A delegation asked for more information on the relationship between the different layers of the implementation structure, saying that there should be clear lines of accountability and transparency and that the Board should have access to their findings. The same speaker asked about the role of Mr. Berry, who was serving as a consultant to both the Acting Executive Director and the head of the task force, with a potential conflict of interest. Another speaker requested clarification on Mr. Berry's role and length of service, and suggested that he help UNICEF to establish processes rather than play a role in the actual implementation.

20. Mr. Berry said that in his previous role as management consultant, he had acted as a diagnostician. Now, as an adviser, he was acting as a part-time counsel to the Acting Executive Director and the head of the task force. He might be asked to conduct workshops, for example.

21. Several speakers stressed the importance of staff participation - at all levels - in the process. They asked how staff would be chosen for participation in the task force and other bodies, and if staff would be able to nominate candidates.

22. One delegation expressed concern about the lack of focus and of an action-oriented approach in the report, which emphasized internal dialogue and not a clear timetable for action. UNICEF needed leadership and could not afford a lengthy process of internal consultation without clear direction. There must be a more coordinated approach to such issues as budgetary changes in CPRs, global goals and the role of global funds. However, another delegation said that the report gave the impression that the secretariat was rushing ahead, rather than consulting with staff and National Committees. The process should allow for consultations with them. Another speaker asked for Mr. Berry's comments on the statement in the annex that the study did not capture accurately issues of multi-culturalism and gender, and how the recommendations might be different because of this. The secretariat replied that those factors had been underplayed in the management study, and while the recommendations might not need to be changed, sensitivity should be shown to those issues during the follow-up process.

23. The Deputy Executive Director, Operations, said that the secretariat was working to instil as much staff participation as possible into the process given the fact that UNICEF had 7,000 staff around the world. The staff taking part in the councils and workshops would not be replaced, but those who were members of the task force - three international Professionals and one General Service staff member - would be, but at no additional costs. Staff members would be able to apply for two posts on the task force, at P-3 and G-6 levels, while the remaining post of Deputy to the Director, Mr. Daniel Brooks, would be filled through the Senior Staff Review process. Workshops on specific areas would involve participants from regional and field offices as well as headquarters.

24. A speaker said that the leader of the task force would be a member of the Steering Committee, but his powers were unknown. The Executive Director, as head of the Steering Committee, could ignore the recommendations of the task force. He asked what would be the exact powers and competencies of the task force and the Steering Committee, and if the task force could refer proposals to the Executive Board. He also raised questions about communication between the various bodies.

25. The Acting Executive Director said that there was a difference between consultation and participation, and there was a point where management must manage. True participation implied power and decision-making. A participatory process also involved information and decisions on how to improve and strengthen

management and take responsibility for action. The Steering Committee would have final decision-making power and be the point of accountability to the Board. If the Board also wanted the task force and/or the advisory councils to report to it, then it could do so. However, this might create confusion regarding the accountability of the Executive Director to the Board. Staff members had suggested that they be represented on the Steering Committee, but if that were so, it too might raise the issue of the ultimate accountability of senior management for management decisions. The task force would manage and monitor the process of implementation and organize the working groups. The advisory councils would be composed primarily of "go ahead" people who would be the next generation of leaders. As for the involvement of the Board, it would discuss the issue at every session in 1995, but its formal approval would not be needed to begin action in all areas.

26. A delegation stated that staff should be able to nominate representatives to the advisory councils and that it would be proper to include staff representatives on the Steering Committee, which would not prevent management from managing or interfere with accountability.

27. A delegation said that there also must be closer interface with country programmes and procedures "on the ground", more discussion with the regional offices and more participation by Governments. The report presented by the secretariat overemphasized the role of headquarters. Another delegation said that the Board should review ideas on elements of the structure of senior management and the front office, and that the secretariat might find this input useful at this stage. The emphasis on the Steering Committee should be light, with most work being done by the task force, which would lead and facilitate the process. A third speaker said that while the country-level approach was valid, many problems stemmed from administrative problems at headquarters.

28. Delegations asked about the role of regional directors in the Steering Committee, given the importance of the regional dimension in the future work of UNICEF and the fact that the discussion of the offices' role was a key part of the management review. Several delegations suggested increased participation by UNICEF representatives.

29. A number of delegations stressed the importance of clearly defining and rationalizing the functions of regional offices. One delegation asked for additional information on the division of labour among headquarters, the regional offices and country offices, given that the management study proposed changes with regard to the geographic sections at headquarters. The speaker also raised questions about UNICEF support to countries that did not have country programmes, and how this would be affected by changes in the regional office structures. Another speaker said that the Board must address the role of the regional offices and rationalization of the organization's structure no later than the third regular session in September. This discussion must take place before a decision could be taken on the proposed regional office for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States.

30. Several delegations asked about inter-sessional consultations, as specified in decision 1995/7 (E/ICEF/1995/9 (Part I)). One speaker said that while management should move ahead on such matters as human resources management, it would be appropriate to use the provisions of decision 1995/7 to have early consultation with the Board on the approaches to be taken, issues and the timetable for implementation. Specifically, there should be consultations, at the appropriate time, on the mission statement and emergency operations.

31. Speakers welcomed the importance being given to National Committees, especially with regard to private sector fund-raising and their experience in implementing and supporting projects. One speaker suggested that external consultants might be needed to deal with the management study's recommendations concerning the National Committees.

32. A representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF said that the Committees had held consultations on the issue of the management study. They had met recently with the Acting Executive Director and would hold a full review in May at their annual meeting. At the first regular session, the Committees had expressed concern about the study's lack of attention to the Committees, but they were pleased with comments made by the Acting Executive Director today.

33. The Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, said that the secretariat would establish a task force on fund-raising, which would include the National Committees. There would be no need for external consultants on this issue because sufficient knowledge existed in house. The secretariat would work with the National Committees at their annual meeting and through this task force and other forums on how to improve relations with UNICEF and reporting.

34. See decision 1995/12 for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

B. Proposals for UNICEF cooperation and programme reviews

General comments on country programme recommendations

35. Several delegations requested more information on the criteria for the allocation of general resources and supplementary funds. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that the allocation of general resources was based on indicators for child population, gross national product (GNP) per capita and under-five mortality rate (U5MR), which were introduced in 1983. These indicators were reviewed in 1989 and 1990, when they were compared with those used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies, and it was concluded that they responded adequately to the organization's needs. U5MR in particular was related to many factors, including health, women's status and nutrition. The indicators were not applied rigidly and consideration could be given to countries in especially difficult circumstances. With regard to the allocation of supplementary funds, there was no formula for allocation. Past experience was used as a guide, as were the needs of the country, fund-raising experience, future expectations and the potential interests of donors. Usually, supplementary funds were for the expansion of service coverage.

36. One delegation stated that the allocation of general resources should be focused on a minimum package of activities. Another delegation expressed concern about the wide gap in the amounts of general resources and supplementary funds and the potentially adverse effect on programme implementation should sufficient supplementary funding not be available. Two delegations sought clarification on the criteria for increasing a country's general resources ceiling. Clarification also was sought on the criteria for the cessation of UNICEF cooperation with countries.

37. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, emphasized that general resources provided a basic package of services and should be used in the most strategic way possible. In commenting on the general resources ceiling, he referred to the "round-up" paper (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1). Adjustments in

indicators were the major reason for an increase in the general resources ceiling. Other increases might be in response to opportunities for acceleration of activities, for example, for salt iodization in Eritrea. Increases also depended on the availability of funds. As to the criteria for the cessation of UNICEF cooperation with countries, he said that all developing countries were eligible for assistance, but as socio-economic conditions improved, a country's general resources allocation would decrease gradually. For example, given the positive economic and social development in the Republic of Korea, it had been decided by mutual agreement to start a new partnership with the formation of a National Committee for UNICEF.

38. One delegation pointed out that only individual CPRs were discussed at Executive Board meetings, not whether the allocation of resources to specific countries was appropriate, and that it was policy rather than technical questions that the Board should be addressing.

39. With respect to the content of CPRs, one speaker suggested that the narrative should be better linked with the budget and that the priority activities for general resources and supplementary funding should be identified. Another speaker said that the situation analysis was more descriptive than analytical and provided insufficient information on national and external resources. The section on lessons learned could provide more details on the mix of strategies. Decentralization and the UNICEF role in the process should be analysed in more detail.

40. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, agreed that the contents could be improved and that lessons learned often could be better presented to define UNICEF assistance roles. However, there were other important background documents which addressed those issues. In addition, the secretariat was taking a broader view of the macroeconomic and social development context.

41. A delegation expressed concern about programme support costs in a number of the CPRs being submitted to the Board. Different approaches were used in different CPRs, raising questions about actual costs at the country level. When the figures were transparent in quantitative terms, the level of programme support costs was high, as in Afghanistan, Ghana and other countries, where one in four dollars was for programme support. This was in addition to the administrative and programme support budget. For these reasons, the delegation endorsed the management study recommendation that the administrative and programme budgets of country offices be integrated.

42. The speaker also raised questions about the specific mix of strategies used in the country programmes; more would be needed in this area to comply with decision 1994/A/8 (E/ICEF/1994/13). The CPRs should discuss the specific mix for each country, what emphasis should be given to programme priorities and what were the reasons for that emphasis in the context of each country. In addition, in its efforts to achieve the goals for 1995 and the year 2000, UNICEF should not overlook the importance of achieving programme sustainability.

43. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that UNICEF already was working to harmonize budget cycles and presentations and to show the relationship between programming and staffing.

Africa

44. The Executive Board had before it 7 full country programme recommendations from Africa, 10 short-duration recommendations, 7 recommendations for additional resources to fund already approved programmes, and 2 recommendations for supplementary funds for already approved country programmes ("stand-alone"

recommendations), as summarized in E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1. The Regional Directors for Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa gave brief overviews of the CPRs. Presentations also were made by the UNICEF representatives for Uganda and Burkina Faso.

45. With regard to the Uganda country programme, one delegation stressed the need to support the Government's decentralization process. Another delegation raised a query as to what proportions of resources were allocated to service delivery and capacity-building. The representative replied that 60 per cent was allocated to service delivery and 40 per cent to capacity-building. One delegation commended the move from a vertical to an integrated approach to country programming and stressed that close interministerial coordination was a prerequisite to the success of the programme. In addition, an integrated approach required long-term planning and highly focused monitoring. The same delegation also requested details of funding sources and ways in which capacity-building in health services could be strengthened at the district level as part of decentralization. The delegation suggested that the country office's annual reports be used to report on the implementation of supplementary funds instead of preparing separate reports for donors.

46. The report on the field visit to Uganda (E/ICEF/1995/CRP.16) was introduced by one of the participants. The speaker commended the commitment of Uganda's political leadership as each district has formulated its own programme based on the country programme. The importance of linkages between sectoral programmes and the need to promote a sense of local ownership in the programme was emphasized. It was underscored that UNICEF had a major advocacy role, particularly in addressing harmful traditional practices and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The geographical disparities between the north and south were noted, and UNICEF was urged to focus on disparity reduction as a major strategy of the new programme. Sectoral and intersectoral coordination with NGOs and other donors, under government auspices, should be strengthened. The representative responded that not only was UNICEF active in coordination of sectoral policy issues, but also was collaborating with WHO in the "sick child initiative" and with the World Bank in strengthening district health services. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the same delegation said that community participation in meetings at the district level would help to promote empowerment. More frequent visits to the field should be made by senior staff. Referring to the evaluation plan, the representative said that the master plan of operations contained more detailed provisions and outlined UNICEF involvement at the district level.

47. A speaker commended the participatory approach of the Uganda country programme process and requested clarification on the coordination of the country programme committee. The representative replied that the Government organized the committee. The same delegation also said that there was no reference in the CPR to the roles of such other partners as United Nations agencies. The strategy mix, with its focus on integration of gender and health, was welcomed. The representative said that UNICEF was participating in the Government's formulation of a country strategy note and that the UNICEF programme process was being used as a model for inter-agency collaboration. In response to a query on UNICEF involvement in combating HIV/AIDS, the representative said that UNICEF was an active member of the National AIDS Commission and supported activities related to the reproductive health of youth. The same delegation stressed that UNICEF should be involved in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The representative affirmed UNICEF involvement in advocacy for child rights.

48. Regarding the country programme for Eritrea, one speaker praised the programme for its application of lessons learned during past programme

cooperation and its increased focus on capacity-building and community empowerment. However, more analysis was required on the impact of decentralization on UNICEF-assisted programmes. The regional director agreed and said that UNICEF would cooperate closely with the Government and provincial authorities in this analysis. The decentralization process would be analysed through the annual programme reviews. The same speaker welcomed the focus on female circumcision and reducing the high maternal mortality rate (MMR), but queried the omission of abortion as a cause of maternal mortality.

49. Concerning the CPR for Madagascar, one delegation commended its more focused and strategic approach as compared with the activity-based approach of the past. However, there was a query as to whether the pilot project on nutrition had been evaluated. The regional director confirmed that the project had been evaluated and, as a result, health, environmental and nutrition education had been introduced into the school curriculum. The same delegation welcomed the launch of the National Plan of Action for Social Recovery, but said that UNICEF, in supporting the plan, would need to maximize the impact of its limited financial resources and make strategic choices. Clarification was sought on the programme support costs and the allocation for emergency services. The regional director explained that programme support costs had been integrated into the budget of the sectoral and supporting programmes. The planning and social statistics programme included emergency preparedness, with the objective of developing an early-warning system and capacity-building in areas affected by cyclones, drought and flooding.

50. Another delegation praised the programme for its focus on the priority needs of the country and its consideration of donor recommendations. In addition, links between sectoral and intersectoral programmes at the grass roots have improved the prospects for replicability. However, the speaker expressed concern about the viability of the Bamako Initiative, suggesting that the Initiative was not fostering solidarity between both the sick and healthy members of a community. Communities should be given an opportunity to choose between different approaches to the Initiative. In addition, UNICEF should separate the management of cost-recovery for drugs from that of financing medical consultations. The Bamako Initiative had been presented with no assessment of possible constraints in the light of the Government's policy on decentralization. The regional director said that the Bamako Initiative was still evolving and that the programme would be monitored. The same delegation noted that there were no concrete statements on cooperation with donors and other agencies. Another speaker said that the situation analysis was more descriptive than analytical and the mix of strategies had not been articulated sufficiently.

51. A delegation welcomed the clear strategic focus on capacity-building and empowerment in the Mauritius country programme, but sought clarification on the participation of bilateral donors in the country programme preparation exercise. The regional director replied that informal consultations had been held with France and the United Kingdom. The same delegation requested information on indicators and outputs against which UNICEF would measure its performance. The regional director explained that a monitoring and evaluation table was part of the programme plan of operations and provided monitoring indicators for each project objective together with the source of data. To a statement that programme support costs had not been included in the documentation, the regional director said that these costs were covered by the project on "programme management and monitoring" in the social policy development, advocacy and monitoring programme. Programme support costs for 1996-2000 would be $550,000, or 7 per cent of the total.

52. The shift from an activity-based to a strategy-based approach in Swaziland was welcomed by one speaker, who said, however, that the strategy needed to be better defined in terms of the strategies presented in the multi-donor evaluation. Responding to a query, the regional director said that a country strategy note would be developed in 1995 as a "national development strategy note". United Nations agencies, NGOs and communities would participate through the Government's consultative process. The speaker also asked if the monitoring and evaluation plan would include a review of strategies and the appropriateness of their mix. The regional director stated that a task force had been established, with the participation of the Central Statistics Office, to monitor the programme and that there would be a review of activities, strategies and the appropriateness of the strategic mix. Lastly, the delegation noted the need to link nutrition education with the management of family resources. The regional director replied that nutrition was a complex problem and that there were other contributing factors. UNICEF would focus on disparity reduction in access to services. In addition, it would strengthen links with United Nations agencies and bilateral donors addressing the problem of household poverty.

53. One delegation addressed the continuing emergency conditions in Angola, stating that in spite of the peace accord, security was still a problem and that there were still many refugees and internally displaced people. The speaker asked if UNICEF was involved in land-mine clearance and the regional director explained that UNICEF was involved in advocacy to raise awareness on the dangers of land-mines but not actual clearance.

54. Regarding the country programme for Burkina Faso, one speaker said that its intersectoral programme approach was in accordance with the Government's priorities. A member of the Executive Board team that had visited Burkina Faso praised the Bamako Initiative and its empowering effect on local communities, but said that the shortage of human resources was severely affecting the delivery of health services. In addition, female genital mutilation was a serious problem and social mobilization efforts were directed at eliminating the practice. Another delegation welcomed the intersectoral approach and the emphasis on empowerment of communities, especially women. The speaker requested more information on how women were being empowered not only to join the work force, but also to participate in community development. The UNICEF representative reiterated that the emphasis of government policy was on improving the economic and legal status of women. Women's empowerment was promoted through credit programmes and women's networks which provided education in life skills.

55. Two delegations said that the country programme for Ghana was the result of extensive consultations and collaboration between the Government and United Nations agencies. A delegation asked how the Convention on the Rights of the Child would be used as a framework for the country programme and within the region. The regional director said that the Convention provided the framework for the Ghana programme, but representatives from the region would discuss UNICEF support to countries in this regard at a meeting to be held in Chad in April. Speakers also requested more information on strategies, evaluation and the proportion of the programme budget which would cover programme support costs. With regard to strategies, the regional director replied that empowerment, capacity-building and service delivery were all interdependent. The criteria for programme evaluation were elaborated in the master plan of operations. Programme support costs represented 23 per cent of the programme budget. The same delegation asked how activities for the acceleration of the mid-decade goals related to the country programme and how their sustainability would be addressed. Lastly, there was a query as to how UNICEF analysed the impact of its programme activities on progress to achieve the national goals.

56. See decision 1995/9 for the recommendations approved by the Executive Board.

Asia

57. The Executive Board had before it five recommendations for full country programmes, two recommendations for additional general resources to fund already approved country programmes and one recommendation for supplementary funds for a subregional communications project, as outlined in E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1. The Regional Directors for East Asia and the Pacific and for South Asia introduced the CPRs, and presentations were made by the UNICEF representatives for Bangladesh and Viet Nam. The UNICEF representative for Myanmar also responded to questions during the discussion.

58. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the quality of the programme recommendations for China, Indonesia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. More information was requested on UNICEF collaboration with other United Nations agencies in HIV/AIDS control programmes. The regional director replied that in Myanmar and Viet Nam, UNICEF-assisted activities were part of joint programmes of United Nations agencies. Collaborative efforts also focused on the border areas of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand.

59. Regarding the recommendation for China, one delegation praised the harmonization of the programme cycle with those of UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), but stated that the objectives were too broad. The delegation asked how UNICEF would be able to focus on selected locations with the greatest needs and at the same time support programmes with national coverage which addressed all 10 goals in the national programme of action. The speaker asked how programmes related to advocacy, capacity-building and empowerment would evolve and what effect government decentralization would have on UNICEF work. Would UNICEF be working only with the Government or in collaboration with NGOs as well? In addition, clarification was sought on the programme support costs of $11 million, which were higher than in the last country programme cycle.

60. The regional director explained that with decentralization, UNICEF would be working more closely with local governments. UNICEF would continue its collaboration with the All China Women's Federation, which was a major partner at the local level. He added that he would respond subsequently to the other questions, as they would require further research.

61. A delegation said that the Indonesia country programme clearly reflected the situation and the priorities of that country. Speakers requested more information on programmes for children in especially difficult circumstances and the country programme's subregional focus, asking specifically whether UNICEF would include the eastern provinces. The regional director said that the component for children in especially difficult circumstances focused primarily on child labour and street children. Although the percentages of children affected might be small, the numbers were significant and the problem was increasing. The country programme did include some eastern provinces. A speaker referred to the problem of coordination during the last programme cycle and asked if this was the explanation for the underexpenditure of 20 per cent in the past country programme. The regional director said that the figures before the Board were the latest available at the time the document was prepared, but since then implementation has reached about 93 per cent of general resources. Much had been done in the area of community organization and development, particularly through UNICEF collaboration with the Family Welfare Movement. This collaboration would continue and be intensified in the new programme.

62. A number of delegations commended the Viet Nam country programme, including its focus on the education of girls and women; the water supply and sanitation programme, including pump maintenance and support to 142 poor districts; and social mobilization and community participation. Another speaker cited the importance of family empowerment, convergence of services and collaboration with the private sector. One delegation applauded the establishment of a separate project for child rights.

63. A speaker asked how UNICEF addressed the issue of decentralization in planning. Another delegation asked how UNICEF determined the amount for supplementary funding and what would be the result if the full amount requested was not received. The representative explained that the amount proposed for supplementary funding was based on fund-raising and implementation performances over the past few years. In the event of a shortfall in supplementary funding, the emphasis would be determined in consultation with the Government. If that were to happen, UNICEF would advocate that priority be given to improving the health infrastructure in poor areas. Commenting on HIV/AIDS, he said that UNICEF was working closely with UNFPA and WHO to develop health education materials for schools.

64. The comprehensive programme approach in Myanmar, focusing on the grass roots, indigenous people and sustainability, was commended by one delegation. Another delegation expressed appreciation to the representative for facilitating a visit of resident diplomatic missions in Myanmar. The visit complemented the documentation and facilitated understanding of the strategic choices made in the programme. The emphasis on service delivery was justified in the light of the current situation of women and children. One delegation suggested that activities for the control of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) be supported from general resources rather than supplementary funds. The representative assured the Board that IDD control would be given high priority and be supported by sufficient general resources. The objective was to iodize all salt and create a demand for it. If supplementary funds were obtained, they would be used for trials of double fortification of salt with iodine and iron and for acceleration of programme implementation.

65. One speaker said that the Board's concerns had been reflected in the new country programme, and a number of delegations welcomed UNICEF collaboration with NGOs, which would strengthen the capacities of disadvantaged groups and advance their participation in development. In response to a question, the representative identified constraints to reaching target groups, particularly ethnic minorities, including: poor access to some locations in adverse weather conditions; the underdeveloped health infrastructure; and the paucity of front-line workers. However, the situation should improve as the job descriptions for front-line workers were refined, the health infrastructure improved in the States, collaboration with NGOs progressed and capacity-building and advocacy for the rights of the child came into fruition. Speakers also suggested that UNICEF encourage further involvement of international NGOs in the country so that their relevant experiences could be used to meet the basic needs of children. Commenting on HIV/AIDS control, the representative said that UNICEF was collaborating with WHO through the National Communication Centre on curriculum development and through services for women and youth on HIV/AIDS, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and reproductive health.

66. One delegation asked about the additional general resources being requested for Myanmar since an allocation for the same amount had already been made from global funds. The same speaker commended the reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the presentation of the recommendation, saying that a project on child rights had been established in the new programme. A number of delegations welcomed UNICEF efforts in empowering women, especially at the

community level, through education and skills training. Several delegations also stressed the importance of continued programme assessment not only of implementation, but, equally important, of the lessons learned in terms of sustainability and capacity-building.

67. A few delegations expressed concern about the political and human rights situation in Myanmar. However, other speakers stressed that the Executive Board was not the proper forum to address human rights violations and that UNICEF cooperation should not be politicized.

68. One speaker commended the overview by the regional director for South Asia and highlighted the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the priority given to gender issues and UNICEF partnership with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Efforts on behalf of the Convention could be coordinated with the promotion of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The regional director replied that the UNICEF focus on the relationship between the two Conventions was based on an examination of historical evidence from developed countries; indications were that children's rights could not be satisfied without first guaranteeing women's rights and equity. The region was giving this relationship more attention than in the past.

69. Delegations from countries to be served by the subregional communications project on the "Meena" series expressed strong support for this initiative. One speaker said that the project had great potential for replication in other countries where issues of the girl child needed to be addressed. The materials could be suitably adapted to each country, and with the involvement of the private sector and NGOs, the project could be integrated into programmes in other countries, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. One delegation expressed concern that participating Governments had not been consulted during the preparation of the proposal for expansion of the "Meena" project. The regional director said that the plans for expansion had evolved through a consultative process involving technical departments and ministries. He agreed, however, that a more intensive process of consultation with more key officials was necessary for successful expansion of the project. Consultations were scheduled to be held at regional and country levels.

70. One delegation said that Bangladesh had achieved notable success in universal child immunization (UCI), primary health care and safe drinking water. Several speakers commended the presentation made by the UNICEF representative and expressed appreciation for the various components of the programme. The analysis of the lessons learned in the CPR was seen as informative and analytical, indicating that the programme had responded to the needs of the country.

71. Several delegations commented on the shift in emphasis from health and nutrition to education, with most appreciating the high priority being given to education. However, one speaker, while agreeing with the shift in emphasis, felt that a better case could have been made in the CPR for this strategic shift. Given the prevailing high MMR, another delegation stressed that health should continue to be a high priority. The representative said that, in fact, the amount of resources allocated to health and nutrition had not been reduced in the new programme; the increase in resources for education had created an apparent shift in emphasis. Education was being looked at in its widest sense as an essential supportive strategy for other components, including nutrition, sanitation and health.

72. One speaker noted that the emphasis on education in the Bangladesh programme was in line with the priorities of other countries in the region.

Several delegations commented on the country's success in programmes for immunization, women, water supply, voluntary organizations and community groups. They emphasized, however, that formidable challenges remained, including the problems of the urban poor, maternal mortality and children in especially difficult circumstances. One delegation asked if any information was available on the trafficking of children and women. The representative responded that no systematic information was available, although a small-scale survey had revealed this to be a problem. UNICEF was working with research organizations to estimate better the nature and extent of the problem.

73. Several delegations referred to various efforts in the area of maternal health. Some speakers indicated that they had received information from the country level that programmes were suffering from a lack of coordination among various donors who were promoting different strategies. Another delegation, however, said that the programmes were going well and merited further support. The representative indicated that there were several different efforts to address maternal mortality and improve obstetric care. These efforts had arisen from unsuccessful efforts over the past 20 years that had focused on the training of traditional birth attendants (TBAs). This focus was now seen to be an incorrect strategy and, as a result, the Government had decided formally to incorporate new initiatives into its programme.

74. Several delegations praised the Government's efforts, within the context of UNICEF cooperation, to increase the participation of voluntary groups and communities and to decentralize the planning process. One delegation asked if the efforts to decentralize planning and implementation through the accelerated district approach were sustainable in view of the limited capacity that existed at lower levels. The representative stated that UNICEF was helping to introduce appropriate technology and approaches in five districts; this effort would be expanded, thus creating stronger capacity. One speaker reiterated that the Government was committed to a bottom-up planning process.

75. One delegation inquired about the impact of the support to salt iodization in Bangladesh. The representative replied that the level of salt iodization was surveyed regularly and results indicated that the availability of iodized salt had increased from 20 to 35 per cent, which was still below the interim target level of 50-60 per cent. Further progress could be made through a government ban on the importation of non-iodized salt, and a decision was awaited from the Government. UNICEF also was working on this problem at the regional level through SAARC and had been involved in the formulation of a draft protocol on the banning of imports and exports of non-iodized salt.

76. A speaker commended efforts to tackle the problem of child labour, but said that the allocation of funds in the country programme for this effort was insufficient. The representative explained that the programme had adopted a strategy of gradually eliminating child labour through the introduction of compulsory primary education. The idea was to target children aged five and six years. This strategy also recognized, however, that non-educational incentives were required to keep children in school, as poverty forced children into labour. UNICEF supported Government efforts to provide incentives through the food-for-education programme. In addition, UNICEF was helping the Government in a dialogue with the private sector so that children would be withdrawn from hazardous forms of labour and the prevention of child labour would evolve.

77. Several delegations expressed concern about the problem of nutrition in the region and asked whether UNICEF cooperation could meet this challenge. The regional director said that nutrition was a major concern throughout the region and that UNICEF was taking the challenge very seriously. Good nutrition depended on three elements - food security, care and health - and therefore

required a multisectoral initiative. By emphasizing education, the Bangladesh programme was accelerating progress towards more satisfactory child nutrition. In Bangladesh, nutrition programmes were closely coordinated between the World Bank and UNICEF. At the regional level, UNICEF had taken the first steps to launch an initiative that would involve a broad range of partners and networks.

78. See decision 1995/9 for the recommendations approved by the Executive Board.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

79. The Executive Board had before it four full CPRs as summarized in E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1, which were introduced by the regional director.

80. Two delegations questioned the feasibility of the development component of the Afghanistan country programme given the volatility of the situation in that country. Despite plans for development activities, all programme expenditures in the past had been devoted to emergency services. In addition, programme support costs were high, at 24 per cent of total expenditure. The regional director said that the situation would be assessed through mid-term and annual reviews. The high programme support costs were necessary because of the emergency situation, but it was anticipated that they would be reduced gradually when support functions had been consolidated within the country.

81. According to another delegation, the programme should be subnational rather than national in coverage. The regional director confirmed that the programme had a regional focus in the three regions that were relatively stable. To a suggestion that the country office should be located in one of those regions instead of Peshawar, Pakistan, he said that staff security had to be considered. Whenever possible, international staff had worked in Kabul and UNICEF planned to place as many staff as possible within the country. Offices equipped with underground bomb shelters were one element of security.

82. One speaker stated that conditions had deteriorated in Armenia and Azerbaijan and expressed support for the recommendations for both countries. Given the modest amount of resources available, one delegation asked if the programme in Armenia would be able to address the needs of refugees and internally displaced people. The regional director replied that these people received support through the joint United Nations emergency appeal and not from general resources. A delegation said that the data on Armenia's GNP per capita included in the CPR were not current and that the wording on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict was incorrect. The regional director said that statistics were being updated and would be included in documentation as soon as it was available. In future, references to Nagorny Karabakh would be in compliance with the terminology used by the United Nations.

83. Another delegation asked about the similarity in general resources funding levels for Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite the latter's high child population and U5MR. The regional director said that all countries that were members of the Commonwealth of Independent States had an annual general resources level of $1 million. Larger amounts of additional funds had been received through the inter-agency emergency appeal for Azerbaijan. The balance between development and emergency activities was achieved through an adaptive programme approach. For example, immunization had both short- and long-term objectives. Emergency programmes usually had a high supply content and development programmes had higher capacity-building and advocacy components.

84. Delegations commented favourably on UNICEF work in Romania, specifically the multi-donor video production and the family-based and teacher/child learning models, as well as the effective use of data and analysis for policy formulation. One delegation thought that the objectives were overly ambitious in terms of impact. The regional director replied that although there was a shift from the earlier focus on rehabilitation, the programme strategy was realistic in view of the partnerships that UNICEF had fostered at all levels. One speaker said that further efforts were necessary to de-institutionalize child care, particularly for children with special needs. The regional director said that the number of institutionalized children gradually was decreasing. The United States, in particular, has made important contributions to this process.

85. A speaker said that the secretariat had acted prematurely in including certain countries in this region, especially in the light of ongoing informal consultations on the composition of the region and the location of the regional office. Several delegations requested more information on the allocation of UNICEF resources among all regions for the period 1995-2000. One delegation proposed that a report on regional programme development be prepared for discussion at the annual session. The same delegation suggested that countries should be presented within their region according to the size of UNICEF financial resources allocated rather than in alphabetical order. Formats for those proposals had been circulated informally for consideration by Board members and the secretariat. The delegation requested a response from the secretariat to questions raised at recent formal and informal meetings, particularly those raised by countries within the region.

86. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that the "round-up" document (E/ICEF/P/L.10 and Add.1) contained some of the information requested on the allocation of resources. However, the Executive Director's report, which will be discussed at the annual session, would provide a more complete picture. The secretariat also agreed to provide further background information on the application of the criteria for the allocation of general resources.

87. See decision 1995/9 for the recommendations approved by the Executive Board.

The Americas and the Caribbean

88. The Executive Board had before it three recommendations for short-duration country programmes, two recommendations for additional general resources to fund already approved programmes and one recommendation for supplementary funds for an already approved country programme, as summarized in E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean presented the CPRs and gave an overview of recent social and economic developments in the region. These included follow-up actions on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all countries in the region; innovative advocacy approaches related to efforts to achieve national goals; and mobilization of resources. UNICEF was working with Governments and the public to ensure that the Convention was taken into account in the design of policies for children.

89. Referring to the report on regional developments (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.5), several delegations acknowledged that the region's macroeconomic indicators had improved, but expressed concern that these indicators did not adequately reflect deteriorating social conditions. One speaker said that it would be difficult to sustain achievements at a time when aid flows were being reduced and government expenditures on the social sector were limited by structural adjustment policies and the burden of external debt. Another delegation referred to the challenge

of sustaining economic reform, the democratization process and improvements in social conditions. Some delegations expressed their appreciation for UNICEF support through the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean. Two speakers stated that legislative reform had been initiated in their countries as a follow-up to ratification of the Convention.

90. See decision 1995/9 for the recommendations approved by the Executive Board.

Middle East and North Africa

91. The Executive Board had before it one full CPR, as summarized in E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa gave a brief overview of developments in the region and introduced the CPR.

92. Two delegations expressed support for the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic. It was stated that as a result of UNICEF cooperation, that country had achieved concrete results, including increased immunization coverage, no reported cases of polio since 1983, wide use of iodized salt and participation by grass-roots organizations in programme delivery. One delegation pointed out that Palestinian women and children living in the Syrian Arab Republic also benefited from the programme. Two delegations emphasized that contributions to humanitarian programmes should not be based on political considerations.

93. Another speaker endorsed the programme's emphasis on achievement of the mid-decade goals, which, however, should not undermine the sustainability of programmes. Programme support costs, at 20 per cent, were found to be too high. The regional director replied that the figure covered both travel and equipment for the new area-based programmes; it was a planning figure and the entire amount might not be needed. The same delegation said that collaborative efforts between the United Nations Relief and Works Administration for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and UNICEF would improve the overall impact of programme delivery. The regional director stated that UNICEF works closely with UNRWA and that she would provide more details at the annual session, when the Executive Board will discuss programmes for Palestinian children and women.

94. It was proposed by one delegation that the "Meena" subregional communications project used in South Asia be adapted for advocacy on the situation of the girls and women in this region. Morocco's progress in the education of girls also was highlighted.

95. One speaker said that he had been astonished by the statements made about Algeria in paragraphs 6, 10, 12, and 14 of the report on regional programme development (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.4). He stated that those paragraphs described the situation of children in Algeria inadequately, and that neither the competence nor mandate of UNICEF allowed it to make statements on the political situation in a sovereign State. He said that the statements made were incorrect and that they were based on incorrect data. They showed inadequate knowledge of the history, geography, statistics and the reality in Algeria. Furthermore, the document did not mention the progress made by Algeria in improving child health and nutrition since 1980, a fact that was damaging to UNICEF. Thus, he challenged UNICEF to verify the facts of the last 20 years. He also requested the secretariat to make the necessary corrections and to present it at the annual session in May.

96. As a follow-up, the President requested that the secretariat take the necessary measures and reflect these in the report of the session. The secretariat subsequently clarified the situation as follows. Algeria, after years of steady progress in the social sector, is presently facing a difficult economic situation that has a negative impact on the lives of children. Recent agreements with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and the structural adjustment programme have gravely affected the economic situation. As a result, budget cuts have affected social services and the Government is finding it increasingly difficult to procure vaccines, medicines and other essential medical supplies with foreign currency. Algeria, once in the forefront of child survival efforts, had managed to halve its infant mortality rate (IMR) in less than 10 years. The latest data provided by the Algerian National Statistics Office confirmed the steady reduction of IMR from 82.1 to 42.4 per 1,000 live births between 1980 and 1990. UNICEF acknowledges the efforts made in the past and recognizes the fact that the present economic difficulties and the general situation in the country may hamper the Government's tremendous efforts to achieve the mid-decade goals and to maintain a high standard of social services for children.

97. See decision 1995/9 for the recommendation approved by the Executive Board.

C. Reports on field visits by Executive Board members to Africa and Asia

98. The Executive Board had before it the reports of the two teams of Executive Board members who visited Africa (Burkina Faso and Uganda) (E/ICEF/1995/CRP.16) and Asia (India and the Lao People's Democratic Republic) (E/ICEF/1995/CRP.16/Add.1).

99. A member of the team that visited Burkina Faso and Uganda reported on those visits during the discussion of the relevant CPRs (see paras. 44 and 52 above).

100. A member of the team that visited Asia reported that in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the team had been briefed intensively both by UNICEF and by government counterparts. They had seen many projects, including ones for immunization, education and women. In India, among many impressive projects the team had noted progress towards the empowerment of teachers and the involvement of women in water supply and sanitation initiatives. The team had not had a leader and all members had participated equally. For more specific comments on the visit, delegations could read the report prepared by the team.

101. The same speaker added that in the light of the team's experiences on the visit to Asia, the terms of reference for field visits should be revised. The Board should take more seriously the conclusions of the teams and evaluate the visits.

102. A member of the team that visited Africa said that field visits were essential for the Board's work because they allowed members to see the activities of country offices involved in programme implementation. The Board should pay closer attention to the situation of country offices during its discussions on the management study. Some country offices lacked sufficient equipment. There was room for further coordination between regional and country offices. Some members believed that teams should spend all their time on such a visit in the field, but there should be a balance with protocol-related activities as these provided an opportunity to meet authorities and obtain and impart information.

103. Another participant agreed, saying that the visits were positive and fruitful. Her team had spent six days in India, despite the size and complexity of the country and the UNICEF programme, and eight days in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In India, the team had to form three subgroups to cover as much as possible. Closer consideration should be given to the amount of time spent in each country.

104. It was suggested that representatives of developed as well as developing countries participate in future field visits. A participant said that teams should have access to the facilities necessary for their work, particularly with regard to local offices. It also was suggested that there be a wrap-up meeting between team members and government counterparts at the end of the visit so that the team's insights could be shared.

105. There was a brief discussion about revising the terms of reference for the field visits in the light of the experiences to date. Several delegations suggested that the Board needed to update the terms of reference given the fact that in some cases the visits had not been well prepared and the mandate not respected. The Executive Board took note of the reports of the field visits.

D. Report of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy on its session held in Geneva on 30 and 31 January 1995

106. The Executive Board had before it the report of the thirtieth session of JCHP, held in Geneva on 30 and 31 January 1995 (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.9). The President, who had chaired the meeting, introduced the report. He said that the session had been designed to review progress made towards the mid-decade goals and to review work for the goals for the year 2000. JCHP had reached a consensus on the indicators to be used for measurement and how they would be measured. In addition to the goals, JCHP had focused on health systems development in a decentralizing situation (including options for improving district health systems) and the complementarity of UNICEF and WHO in emergency situations.

107. Because the document on the UNICEF health strategy was not available, the Committee's deliberations had focused on the principle of and procedure for addressing policy papers. An informal meeting of several JCHP members and representatives of the two secretariats had reached the following conclusions, which subsequently were endorsed by the Committee:

(a) The World Health Assembly is the body which establishes health policy for countries as well as international organizations;

(b) National-level coordination is the responsibility of Governments;

(c) The role of JCHP in reviewing such papers is to serve as a forum for the exchange of views and to provide comments, rather than to assume a clearance function;

(d) The views of WHO and its Executive Board would always be welcomed.

108. On behalf of the Director General of WHO, a Vice-Chairman of the World Health Assembly and member of JCHP addressed the Executive Board. He stressed that the work of UNICEF and WHO must be mutually reinforcing, in accordance with their respective governing bodies. With regard to the UNICEF health strategy paper, he stressed the need for formal, substantive discussions between WHO and UNICEF before the paper was submitted to the UNICEF Executive Board.

109. Several delegations expressed concern about the consultation process followed during preparation of the health strategy paper, emphasizing the need for a coherent, commonly shared strategy which did not duplicate the work of other United Nations agencies. They requested that there be a broad, substantive consultation process before the health strategy and other policy papers were presented to the Executive Board. The secretariat responded that UNICEF attached great importance to its close collaboration with WHO and made efforts to review its health strategy with them and other United Nations partners. Despite those efforts, there had been inadequate consultation. A speaker asked delegations to remember that there must be a realistic time-frame for such consultation processes. The secretariat responded that such a process had already taken place for the strategy papers on education and water and environmental sanitation and that it would be followed for the strategy papers on health and emergencies, while maintaining realistic time-frames.

110. Addressing other issues discussed in the report, one delegation cited the importance of the JCHP discussion on health systems, emphasizing the need for a sound analysis of the role of the private sector. Another delegation said that the meeting was too strongly goal- and target-oriented and expressed concern that issues of sustainability had not been adequately addressed. The secretariat replied that a goal orientation in UCI efforts had resulted in sustained immunization levels since 1990 for much of the world.

111. The Executive Board took note of the recommendations of the JCHP contained in document E/ICEF/1995/P/L.9 and recommended that the secretariat undertake a thorough consultation of its draft health strategy paper with WHO, the World Bank, UNFPA, and others in preparation for submission to the Executive Board. (See decision 1995/10 for the full text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. UNICEF follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in September 1994

112. The Executive Board had before it a report identifying priority areas for UNICEF in the follow-up and implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (E/ICEF/1995/12 and Corr.1). The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, introduced the report and highlighted the major areas of UNICEF follow-up action. These included reducing maternal mortality; making family planning information and services widely available; programming for youth and women's reproductive health; basic education, emphasizing the reduction of gender disparities; enhancing the role and status of women; and increased collaboration and partnership with UNFPA, WHO and other relevant partners. He corrected an error in paragraph 7 of the report, indicating that a reference to "promoting a small family norm" had been deleted.

113. A representative of UNFPA addressed the Board, expressing that agency's strong support for the UNICEF paper, which corresponded to and complemented the UNFPA approach. She welcomed new opportunities for UNFPA partnership with UNICEF in new areas, in particular the emphasis on eliminating female genital mutilation, responding to the reproductive health needs of adolescents and addressing reproductive health in emergency settings. She outlined the four working groups formed by the ICPD task force which focus on basic education, social policy, women's empowerment and common data/monitoring systems. UNICEF had agreed to lead the latter.

114. Most delegations stated that UNICEF had an important role to play in the follow-up to ICPD and appreciated its willingness to play such a role. However, many delegations expressed dissatisfaction with the report, stating that it failed to go into adequate detail on the specific strategies and operational action that UNICEF will take, including the percentage of its budget to be allocated to activities promoting women, youth and basic education. Several delegations took exception to the recommendations in the paper that UNICEF follow-up to ICPD follow earlier policy papers instead of providing a more reflective reassessment of past strategies in the light of the progress made at ICPD. In suggesting this, they said their intention was not to reopen decisions taken at ICPD, but rather to elaborate further strategies for UNICEF implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

115. The secretariat replied that while it is still developing strategies and interventions in the area of sexual and reproductive health, programming in this area largely reflected the ICPD Programme of Action. Examples in ongoing country programmes included strengthening of antenatal, post-natal and obstetric care, school health education, health education through youth organizations, partnership with mass media, "youth-friendly" health services and th prevention and low-cost treatment of STDs.

116. There were a number of comments on the need for a clearer articulation of how United Nations agencies will collaborate and coordinate their activities at both global and national levels, and for more detailed discussion of the particular role of UNICEF within broader follow-up efforts. One delegation suggested that a joint paper be prepared to include the respective roles of the various agencies under the umbrella of the Inter-Agency Task Force on ICPD Follow-up. Two delegations requested information on UNICEF preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and suggested that UNICEF play a bridging role between Cairo and Beijing. The secretariat cited its strong operational partnerships with the WHO Division of Family Health and Global Programme on AIDS, UNFPA, UNDP and the World Bank, as well as a host of other technical institutions.

117. Delegations said that elements of the Programme of Action were missing from the UNICEF report, including reproductive rights, the role of the family, migration issues and a thorough discussion of education. Several delegations were dissatisfied with the absence of any discussion of abortion in the report, while others stated their opposition to any UNICEF involvement in abortion. The secretariat stated that the UNICEF emphasis on delaying adolescent sexuality, preventing early pregnancy and providing access to family planning information and services contributed to a reduction in the number of abortions. Efforts to strengthen district hospitals would facilitate proper treatment of health complications of abortions, a major cause of maternal mortality.

118. One delegation referred to the consensus that had been reached at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in favour of the 20/20 initiative, under which interested developed and developing country partners would commit themselves to allocating, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of national budgetary resources, respectively, to basic social programmes, and added that this consensus was appropriate, as the initiative might not be universally applicable, since the needs of individual countries vary considerably. The same delegation expressed concern about the working style of UNICEF, in particular, that UNICEF would continue to advocate support for the 20/20 initiative despite the fact that such advocacy had not been authorized by the Executive Board.

119. One delegation noted the absence of any discussion of TBAs, to which the secretariat responded that because of increasing evidence that TBA training was not an effective use of resources, greater emphasis would be placed on ensuring that deliveries were attended by skilled nurse midwives. Another speaker said that UNICEF resources were already overtaxed in responding to the immediate needs of children and, therefore, UNICEF should not divert energy to the area of reproductive health.

120. The Executive Board requested that the secretariat present a revised version of the report at the third regular session (see decision 1995/11 for the full text of the decision).

F. Other matters

121. One speaker said that a minister from her country had wanted to address the Executive Board on the subject of the management study and had informed the secretariat that she had to leave the meeting by a certain time in order to catch a plane. Despite this request, she had not been given the floor and had to leave without speaking. She asked for an apology from the secretariat. The Secretary of the Executive Board and the President apologized, stating that an informal consultation convened by the President had taken longer than expected. The President asked the secretariat to write to the Minister to apologize for her not being given the floor.

122. A delegation introduced a draft decision on coordination of UNICEF activities concerning HIV/AIDS, which was adopted by the Executive Board (see decision 1995/13 for the text of the decision).

123. A delegation said that the secretariat's statement that the implementation of the management review would be funded from savings had raised questions about the possibility of overbudgeting. She requested that the secretariat provide more "user friendly" budget documents which would show all costs for country programmes, financial and administrative costs and consultancy costs. The Deputy Executive Director, Operations, agreed that the systems were too complicated, which was one of the reasons that a consultant would be engaged to work on financial systems. As a start, the secretariat was working on an integrated budget at the country level, beginning this year. The savings were not the result of overbudgeting, but of specific measures taken by the secretariat to reduce some activities in the already approved budget. Seen in context, the costs for implementation of the study amounted to 1.5 per cent of the total budget.

124. The Secretary of the Executive Board drew the attention of delegations to the draft timetables for the annual session and the third regular session and requested that comments be conveyed in writing to the secretariat, which would discuss them with the Bureau.

G. Closing of the session

125. In a written statement distributed to delegations, the Acting Executive Director said that this was a critical time of transition for UNICEF. The secretariat appreciated the support and confidence shown by Board members and was grateful for their guidance and leadership, especially on the vital subject of country programmes. (See E/ICEF/1995/CRP.20 for the full text of the statement.)

126. The President, in his comments, said that the session had shown that donors and recipients alike were passionately interested in making UNICEF an even better organization. Challenges existed in the field, where goals would be achieved, and at headquarters, where improved management would provide better service to the field and allow the best use of resources to maximize the funds available for programmes.

III. DECISIONS ADOPTED

1995/9. Proposals for UNICEF cooperation and programme reviews

The Executive Board

1. Approves the following recommendations of the Executive Director for programme cooperation as summarized in document E/ICEF/1995/P/L.10 and Add.1:

(a) $108,709,249 for general resources funding and $248,383,450 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in Africa, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1995/
Angola	1996	3 200 000	6 700 000	P/L.27
Burkina Faso	1995	260 000		P/L.14
Burkina Faso	1996-2000	14 000 000	34 375 000	P/L.14
Côte d'Ivoire	1995-1996		2 000 000	P/L.35
Eritrea	1995	600 000		P/L.11
Eritrea	1996-2000	7 500 000	25 850 000	P/L.11
Ghana	1995	650 000		P/L.16
Ghana	1996-2000	15 000 000	26 828 000	P/L.16
Madagascar	1995	165 000		P/L.12
Madagascar	1996-2000	15 900 000	44 100 000	P/L.12
Mauritius	1996-2000	3 750 000	500 000	P/L.23
Sao Tome and Principe	1996	750 000	345 000	P/L.27
Senegal	1995-1996	3 072 979		P/L.32
Senegal	1995-1996		3 500 000	P/L.32
Somalia	1995	400 000		P/L.27
Somalia	1996	3 000 000	23 000 000	P/L.27
Swaziland	1995	100 000		P/L.23
Swaziland	1996-2000	3 750 000	2 750 000	P/L.23
Uganda	1995-2000	32 600 000	77 400 000	P/L.13
United Republic of Tanzania	1995-1996		1 035 450	P/L.32
United Republic of Tanzania	1996	4 011 270		P/L.32

(b) $9,108,352 for general resources funding and $44,100,000 for supplementary funding for programme cooperation in the Americas and the Caribbean, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1995/
Argentina	1995	5 000 000		P/L.29 and Corr.1
Argentina	1996	1 000 000	9 000 000	P/L.29 and Corr.1
Guatemala	1995-1996		2 700 000	P/L.36
Haiti	1995-1997	5 100 000	25 800 000	P/L.29 and Corr.1
Jamaica	1995-1996	1 500 000	1 600 000	P/L.29 and Corr.1
Mexico	1995	431 512		P/L.33
Venezuela	1995	1 076 840		P/L.33

(c) $344,074,941 for general resources funding and $430,500,000 for supplementary funds for programme cooperation in Asia, as follows:

Country/ programme	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1995/
Bangladesh	1996-2000	88 000 000	162 000 000	P/L.21
Bhutan	1996	873 645		P/L.34
Cambodia	1995	230 000		P/L.34
China	1995	1 980 000		P/L.17
China	1996-2000	100 000 000	60 000 000	P/L.17
Indonesia	1995-2000	72 000 000	70 000 000	P/L.18
Myanmar	1995	3 230 049		P/L.19
Myanmar	1996-2000	32 500 000	23 500 000	P/L.19
Viet Nam	1995	1 261 247		P/L.20
Viet Nam	1996-2000	44 000 000	91 000 000	P/L.20
Subregional multimedia communications initiative for South Asia	1995-1999		24 000 000	P/L.37

(d) $39,500,000 for general resources and $48,500,000 for supplementary funding for Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1995/
Afghanistan	1995	500 000		P/L.22
Afghanistan	1996-1999	24 000 000	28 000 000	P/L.22
Armenia	1995-1999	5 000 000	6 500 000	P/L.26
Azerbaijan	1995-1999	5 000 000	6 500 000	P/L.26
Romania	1995-1999	5 000 000	7 500 000	P/L.26

(e) $5,000,000 for general resources and $5,000,000 for supplementary funds in the Middle East and North Africa, as follows:

Country	Period	General resources	Supplementary funds	Document E/ICEF/1995/
Syrian Arab Republic	1996-2000	5 000 000	5 000 000	P/L.24

2. Approves an amount of $1,019,433 to cover overexpenditure, as described in document E/ICEF/1995/P/L.38;

3. Decides to consider at its annual session of 1995 the country programme recommendations contained in documents E/ICEF/1995/P/L.15, E/ICEF/1995/P/L.25, E/ICEF/1995/P/L.28, E/ICEF/1995/P/L.30 and E/ICEF/1995/P/L.31.

Second regular session
22 and 23 March 1995

Decision 1995/10. Report of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy on its thirtieth session

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) on its thirtieth session (E/ICEF/1995/P/L.9);

2. Commends the work done by the two secretariats in a spirit of partnership and complementarity;

3. Takes note of the recommendations of JCHP contained in document E/ICEF/1995/P/L.9;

4. Requests that the secretariat of UNICEF undertake a thorough consultation of the draft UNICEF health strategy document with concerned parties such as JCHP, WHO, the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund and others, as it deems appropriate, in preparation for submission to the UNICEF Executive Board in order to promote its implementation at the country level.

Second regular session
23 March 1995

Decision 1995/11. Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of document E/ICEF/1995/12 and Corr.1 on UNICEF follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development;

2. Requests the secretariat to submit at its third regular session a revised paper taking into account the comments made by Board members at the present session.

Second regular session
23 March 1995

Decision 1995/12. UNICEF management review

The Executive Board,

Recalling its decision 1995/7 of 6 February 1995 on the management review of UNICEF,

1. Welcomes the initial response of the secretariat contained in document E/ICEF/1995/AB/L.4 and the additional information presented during the current session of the Executive Board;

2. Agrees with the secretariat's intention to reallocate funds already approved for the implementation of the review as outlined in the document and in light of the discussion on this subject by the Executive Board;

3. Requests the secretariat to elaborate further, taking into account the points of view expressed by members of the Executive Board, the work plan (contained in document E/ICEF/1995/AB/L.4) for the implementation of the management review follow-up and to submit it, for information and guidance of the Executive Board;

4. Calls upon the secretariat to redraft the terms of reference for further consultancies presented to the Board, taking into account the views expressed by Board members at the present session;

5. Decides to consider the question of the UNICEF mission, including emergencies, at the 1995 annual session of the Executive Board.

Second regular session
23 March 1995

Decision 1995/13. Coordination of UNICEF activities concerning HIV/AIDS

The Executive Board

1. Urges the UNICEF secretariat, like other co-sponsoring agencies, to participate actively in the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS and to support the director of this programme;

2. Notes with satisfaction the Declaration of the Paris Summit on HIV/AIDS held on 1 December 1994 and urges that all possible steps be taken to implement it in the context of the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS;

3. Requests the UNICEF secretariat to develop a strategy for the inclusion of HIV/AIDS components in its programmes and regular activities within the framework of the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS.

Second regular session
23 March 1995